

Will the broadcast flag interfere with consumers ability to make copies of DTV content for their personal use, either on personal video recorders or removable media?

The goal of the broadcast flag is to prevent certain kinds of copying. It is a very, very simple marker - a flag. It's an incredibly blunt message. It is impossible to accurately describe which copying is fair use and which copying is piracy with a single flag.

Would the digital flag interfere with consumers ability to send DTV content across networks, such as home digital networks connecting digital set top boxes, digital recorders, digital servers and digital display devices?

I have many networked computers that play video. Some of them were purchased by me, some by friends; I borrow computers, and I loan computers.

The broadcast flag will make my devices decide who's using them, and tell me that I can't view my video on my friend's handheld computer, even if I'm the one operating it.

Would the broadcast flag requirement limit consumers ability to use their existing electronic equipment (equipment not built to look for the flag) or make it difficult to use older components with new equipment that is compliant with the broadcast flag standard?

If hardware with the broadcast flag will work properly with equipment that doesn't have it, then the broadcast flag will do nothing. Clearly, the idea of the broadcast flag is that all hardware must have it - and any hardware that doesn't must not be supported anymore.

Would a broadcast flag requirement limit the development of future equipment providing consumers with new options?

Innovation in computers and electronics depends upon the ability to do amazing things with devices that their designers never realized were possible. The moment the designers force you to only do precisely what they imagined you should do, you drastically limit innovation and progress.

What will be the cost impact, if any, that a broadcast flag requirement would have on consumer electronics equipment?

Requiring that equipment have specific tamper-proof chips in it will restrict designers' ability to use the components they want, or to provide for easy upgradeability. Hardware that can't be upgraded is more expensive and more wasteful. Upgrading is a form of modification; tamper-proofing means eliminating modifications.

Other Comments:

Look at the European cellular phone market. Standards are stagnant and unchanging. Efficiency - spectrum utilization, in particular - is very low. After years of government-mandated cellular standards, Europe is far behind the US in cellular efficiency.

Europe is now looking to the US for CDMA to increase efficiency and performance. CDMA is a result of the American market's low level of government mandated standards. Requiring a single government standard for communications frequently stops innovation - broadcasting needs standards. Video transfers in the home do not.

